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THE DEAREST SPOT ON EARTH.

We talked of wide domains and spreading lands,
And towering castles builded by the sea;
When, rising up, I cried, with lifted hands:
Behold, I am the richest of the three."
"O ho, thou speak'st in jest, my friend," laughed one,
These lands are mine as far as thou canst see,
And farther yet beyond the setting sun—
"Even so, I am the richest of the three."
"My wealth is hoarded up," the other spake,
"In ships that plough the farthest sea,
And bounteous fortune follows in my wake."
"This may be, yet I'm richer of the three."
"Thou hast no lands, good friend, to equal mine,
No heaps of glittering ore belong to thee;
No lofty halls of marvelous design—
And art thou, then the richest of the three?"
No lands are mine, no stately halls I have,
No heaps of gold, nor castle by the sea,
Nor merchant ships that bird-like skim the wave;
And yet I am the richest of the three."
"Where lies," quoth one, "this treasure of such worth,
That thou art rich in spite of poverty?"
"Mine is the dearest spot of all the earth:
Wherefore I am the richest of the three."
"Indeed! this fabled place we fain would see,
Whereof thou dost with fond endearments rave."
"Then know—the dearest spot on earth to me
Is this—a little, lonely, three foot grave."
—St. George Rest.

GET INTELLIGENCE.

BY J. H. WORST.

The age in which we live has been made sublime by lofty thought. As man emerges from barbarism he sheds from his being abnormal tendencies. Education and refinement polish off the grosser elements as barnacles are scraped from a ship, and the whole man rises in the scale of development.

This scouring process is as old as the ages and has ground up whole generations to evolve a little manhood. Like certain trees, when the bark and sap are removed there is but little left. All men are supposed to possess some good, stowed away somewhere in their personality like a grain of wheat in a mountain of straw.

Religion seeks after this good that is in men and bids it grow and wax mighty. She calls to her aid every facility and invokes every law that can stimulate the growth of righteousness. Right is not always the product of civil agencies, it has often come only when led by the lurid torch of war, just as British oppression rocked the cradle of liberty on the shores of America in 1776, and as the thunders of Antietam unshackled four millions slaves less than a quarter century ago. Every Bill of Rights that was ever passed by legislative body was the product of oppression.

Almighty God has been able somehow to turn the efforts of base men to the general good without in the least mitigating their punishment. The same wave that crushes the proud ship in mid ocean will lift the drowning mariner high upon the beach in another latitude. "It is an ill wind that blows no one good." Within the past week the seas and great lakes have been swept by frightful gales and the rocky shores in places piled high with wrecks, but who shall undertake to disclose the far greater calamities that would have occurred had those fierce winds not swept the lakes and seas.

Some mother's heart was pained when the news was flashed along the wire, that her noble boy went down when the sea ran highest; but who knows but what the dirge the waves sang for him was not one of deliverance for many others. Oh, how narrow-minded and ignorant are the most intelligent of men. I am almost certain that without excessive provocation and unblushing despotism there would not be a "Bible alone" church in existence to-day; but the despot that provoked it into existence is no more rewardable than Judas for the benefits accruing to humanity from the betrayal of Christ. A wicked act may terminate in great good, as the crucifixion of Christ, but retribution challenges the actor to beware. All these apparently conflicting principles but plead with men to get intelligence. Schools have done more for humanity than will ever be recorded. They have done much toward ripping the bars of superstition and prejudice from his imprisoned soul, and have much yet to do before he is free indeed. There is not so much in the subject matter taught as the principles of mental growth inculcated. Man was intended to be an intellectual giant but the devil has made him a mental dwarf, and so many are grateful for the latter attainment.

Religion becomes sweeter and more tangible with intellectual strength, where the soul can peer beyond and commune with God, though fanaticism and superstition make the grandest parade because it is bounded by a lower horizon. The negroes of the Mississippi River make more demonstration if they do manifest less piety, and are positive that they are a monopoly in religion. Their faith is stronger than their understanding by far, and vents itself most grotesquely.

The creed of the apostles furnishes an avenue through which intelligence can reach its highest possibility, without forgetting its mission or expending its energy in vain. Upon this highway of safety man may reach his goal. Here alone is the acme of life, the hope in death.

THE PRESENT DUTY.

BY ADAM H. MASSENNER.

"The night is far spent and the day is at hand."—Rom. 13: 12.

Man cannot escape the necessities of his nature. Without God he is without hope; the heavens are dark above him, and the earth is empty around him. And he can find no comfort in the dark valley until he hears the great Shepherd's voice. Said Prof. Benjamin Pierce just before his death, in an essay: "Men of Science be not false to your children. Faith in your bedside prayer, your logic of induction may be as pellucid as ice, but beware lest you be bound in its frigid and rigid bonds. Again you will perceive the central light to be the unfailing fountain of knowledge. And in it and through it, will join in the praise and worship of the Almighty, Omniscient and all-loving God."

One of the most vital facts of the present age is the vast amount of skepticism existing. While sectarians are wrangling over the interpretation of the Bible, a multitude of voices are crying, who cares how you interpret the Bible; it is only forgery and a fraud. Churches may sleep, and ministers may dream, but human thoughts are busy, and tares are being sown every day. While professors of religion are quarreling with each other, as to how they should worship God, the deeper question is sprung upon them: "Is there any God to worship?" Theologians with their various creeds and theories, are building cross-fences and middle walls of partition, to parcel off the children of God into their various isms and schisms. And all this time the devil is storming the outworks, and is coming in like a flood to destroy the people.

Right will conquer; truth will stand. We do not doubt the ultimate issue; but though truth may triumph, souls may perish, and multitudes may drift down the tides of unbelief and death, while Christians are standing idle, and neglecting to bear their testimony for God and truth. It is the business and duty of every Christian man and woman to-day to give to those who ask a reason for the hope that is within us. There are multitudes who are in darkness to-day, but long for the light. They are in darkness to-day because the Christian world have failed to let their light shine before them. They are in darkness because much of the religion before them has been of forms, parades, shams and empty styles and customs. They are in darkness because the word of God has been overlaid with theological speculations with human theories, with antiquated and unintelligible creeds and vain philosophies, which have come down from distant ages, vitiating the freshness and brightness of truth, and quenching and weakening the faith of those who have received them. There are many who stand to-day upon the walls of Zion, who have passed through days of doubt and uncertainty, and have they forgot that others are longing for the true light as they once did. The word of God will furnish them unto all good works. Why will they not search it and preach it so faithfully that waivers will be established and doubters enlightened and convinced. It is for us who know the Lord to cry aloud in the darkness and lift on high the light of life; that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Then, brethren, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run the race with patience; not contentions, but ever keeping in view the admonition given to Peter by the blessed Savior: "What is that to thee, follow thou me."

HAVE MIRACLES CEASED?

BY ELDER JACOB SPITZER.

I said in my former article that miracles were just as necessary now to prove to the infidel that the gospel is a divine revelation from God, as they were in the days of the apostles and first Christians. The Lord is the same Lord yesterday, to-day and forever, as said the apostle Paul. Have we then not reason to believe that we have departed, in some way or other, from the simplicity of the gospel, as it was delivered by Christ and practiced by the apostles; that we have not the same power to heal that the apostles had? May it not be that we have become too proud, imitating the world too much in the way of pride and arrogance, instead of imitating Christ and his deep humility, and in his non-conformity to the world. The life of Christ teaches the true spirit of the gospel to every profound thinker or intelligent Christian, that we must be transformed from the world, so as to conform ourselves to Christ's law of examples. Paul says: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Christ is the author of the New Testament scriptures, the Head of the Church, and the apostles the witnesses chosen by him to organize and establish the church, and to set it in order as he gave them command to do. If so, it then becomes verified in and through his followers making the gospel true by the power of his word. If we conform to the world it is an evidence that we have become proud, and if so we have departed from the true spirit of God's word, and are in great danger of losing our reward. "God resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." If we are resisted by Christ we are undone forever, unless we repent and retrace our course by applying ourselves to him again according to his word. Paul says: "There is no other way under the heavens whereby we can be saved, only through Christ." Christ says he is the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by him. Where do we look for Christ in all his walks of life? Do we find him upon the pinnacle of fame, or in the high and exalted ways of the world? I find him deep down in the valley of humiliation. His life was a meek and humble life, a life separate and distinct from the world, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. Without an humble imitation of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, we can never hope to be a happy people. Humility must manifest itself in the life of a Christian. The practice of moral duties from sincere love of God and his laws, is virtue and religion. Religion is not very often mentioned in the gospel of Christ. Religion is quite comprehensive in its sense. It includes a belief in the being and perfection of God, in the revelation of his will to man, in man's obligation to obey his commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountability to God. It also includes true godliness, piety of life, with the practice of all moral duties. It therefore comprehends theology as a system of doctrines or principles, as well as practical piety. Christ is the author and finisher of the faith of the saints; the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.

I am well pleased with the reform entered into at Dayton, on the 6th and 7th of June, 1883, in adopting the Bible alone doctrine for the platform of the church. Let us as an organized body of believers see to it, that the word and spirit of God be the materials used in our building. Then the building will be a permanent building, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against. Then the saying of Peter would come in at its place: "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." It will now depend upon the charity that we exercise toward each other, and the amount of honor that we attach to God's word whether we will advance in the cause of Christ, or whether it will be but a nominal increase of members. Increase in the true riches of eternal life is of more worth to us than all the world. Let us not do like many reformers have done, run well for awhile and then fall back again

into tradition and man-made rules. Let us remember that the crown is not received at the beginning nor middle of the race, but to him that holdeth out faithful to the end.

AUTUMN LESSONS.

E. E. ROBERTS.

"We all do fade as a leaf," Isa., 41: 8.

Of all teachers, the grandest is nature. Her lessons are plain, unmistakable, eloquent. Her themes numberless, her resources exhaustless. The tinny spear of grass in early spring time, bursting its frozen bands and raising heavenward to the leaf falling from the bough of the storm-beaten forest monarch, is one unfolding book of Revelations, and blind must be the student who fails to read them, and dull must be the intellect that fails to understand them; but it is of the leaves that we wish to especially think.

On a recent visit to the forest, we look upon the grand tints with all its shades and combinations of color. We pronounce the sight grand, glorious and lovely. But to the more sober and thoughtful there was more than just the beauties of color to be seen and learn from. See yonder tree on the brow of the high hill? Do you mark all the beauty of those rich, dark leaves? They are like the leaves of some of our old Christians. I have two such in my mind, as I write. One a dear old man, whose face is continually lighted with a smile; whose face at eighty years has none of those age marks; none of the wrinkles and marks of dissipation. Young at eighty. Another whose plain bonnet, and smiling face rise before me like a sweet faced angel from the other world, for though many gather around her and delight to call her grand mother, though the hair once shining auburn, when Grandpa led her a blushing bride from the altar, are white, it is not age. Such never grow old. What can be more glorious than the autumn of a true Christian life? But you see yonder tree whose leaves are withered and shrunken. We say they have been frost bitten. Ah, how many frost bitten leaves do we see in life! See the face of discontent, the face that children early learn to shun and avoid; from which the dumb animals flee in terror. They are bent in form and wrinkled, withered and worn; old at forty; frost bitten by sin.

But see at our feet many leaves have fallen. They are dead! Look over our lives; how many dead leaves do we see. How many of the lads and lasses with whom we went to the old county school are gone. You remember Roland; how bright he was. What a speech he could make; how we feared him in our debate; how the girls respected him; how old Squire B—said he was made for Congress. He it was who went to study law in the city. You went to the farm; I to the store. You remember two short years after how they brought him home and buried him. He fell, a victim of sin, like the fallen and dead leaves at our feet.

But see again, yonder is something more than leaves. There are scarcely any leaves on that tree. After the leaves are gone the fruit shows. Reader, when the beauty of your youth shall have faded away, and the body like the leaves of autumn shall have returned to mother earth, will there be rich fruits left behind to tell for God, and make the world better for your having been in it.

But you say; are these indeed dead and lost? No; there is no death. These leaves are not lost, though they fall to the ground and decay. They rise in new forms of beauty. The decaying leaves of to-day shall be flowers and green grass to-morrow. So shall it be with these human leaves of our bodies. Though they decay here, yet shall they be resurrected, and made glorious. There is no death, only a change. God is eternal, and blessed are they that do his commandments. He that bath eyes let him learn the lessons of autumn.

Philadelphia.

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